

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I feel I must respond to the story in the last issue of *Nastawgan* entitled "Caution: Armed Robbery in the North." I was surprised and disappointed to read such an article in a 1996 publication, especially one for and by canoeists. It seems to me that of all people in our society, wilderness travellers who use a craft developed by the indigenous people, and who do most of their canoeing in parts of the country that have sustained the traditional way of life of these peoples for centuries, should have some sensitivity towards the people they encounter.

I gather it never occurred to Bob McCoubry that he was an intruder in the "home" of the Dene. I don't expect he was invited, or even thought of asking if he could travel and camp on their land. With the attitude he expresses I would probably treat him the same way if he showed up on my doorstep.

My wife and I have spent the past several summers travelling through the North. In almost 200 days of canoeing and camping in Cree and Inuit lands we visited 17 villages and dozens of seasonal camps. Our most memorable moments are the unsurpassed and unconditional hospitality we received on numerous occasions. People have literally opened up their homes and camps to us, offering accommodation, food, and anything else we might need. We stayed several days in some settlements, made a point of purchasing some

supplies at the local stores, and left our canoe and equipment during two winters in those "native" communities. One of the many things we learned when travelling in the north is that this generosity and sharing is an important part of life for people who have traditionally lived on the land.

If Mr. McCoubry's attitude is prevalent among wilderness canoeists then I am ashamed to belong to that fraternity.

Greg Brown

Editor's note: After reading the above letter and discussing the issue with a few friends I realize that I've made a grave error by publishing Bob McCoubrie's article "Caution: Armed Robbery in the North" in the last issue of *Nastawgan*. The WCA does not condone opinions such as the ones presented in it, and they have no place in our journal.

My only reason for including the article was to emphasize that wilderness canoeing can occasionally expose trippers to dangerous encounters, wherever we travel. I had of course no intention of condemning any community as a whole. But I failed to critically read the rest of the article and published it in full — which should not have happened.

This has been a tough lesson in editorial responsibility and I apologize to anyone offended by the article.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of the Wilderness Canoe Association consists of six members either elected or acclaimed at the Annual General Meeting. Each member serves a two-year term. The Board is responsible for the management of the club and its finances. We are also responsible for the direction the club is going as an organization. The Board organizes the Fall Meeting, the Wine & Cheese Party, the Annual General Meeting, our booth at Canoe Expo, and our booth at the new Outdoor Adventure Sports Show. We meet four or five times through the year, usually at the secretary's house (Bill King), to discuss the current club affairs and plans for the rest of the year. (Bill is a wonderful host and puts on an excellent "meeting.")

The club has been fortunate to have been served by several long-term members, such as the current Secretary (Bill King), Treasurer (Rob Butler), the membership/computer records organization (Cash Belden, Linda Lane), the *Nastawgan* Editor (Toni Harting), and the various people of the Outings Committee.

In the past four years that I have been on the Board, I have noticed that one of the club's big problems has been the lack of volunteers. One of the reasons for that may be not knowing who to call or what to do. If any member wishes to volunteer to help in any of our

activities described above, they only have to contact a Board member (our phone numbers are on the back page of *Nastawgan*). Currently we are looking for any club member who would like to join the Board of Directors this April at the AGM. The only two real requirements to join the Board are, that you have been a member for at least a few years, and that you bring some enthusiasm with you. This appeal is especially directed towards those members who have not yet had an opportunity to volunteer, but would like to help keep the club operating. Besides, being a Board member looks good on one's resume! If you are interested, please call me at (905) 877-8778 (leave a message if I'm not home).

Paul Hamilton

PARTNERS WANTED

Mountain River, NWT. 19 July to 3 August 1997. Must have whitewater experience. Call Bill Stevenson at (416) 925-0017.